

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) ~~An isolated~~ A mutant strain of *Escherichia coli*, which has an ability to produce and accumulate arginine in a medium when the bacterium is cultivated in the medium, and which is modified to have an enhanced ability to utilize acetate, whereby the ability to produce arginine is enhanced compared to the unmodified bacterium.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~isolated~~ mutant strain of *Escherichia coli* according to claim 7, wherein the bacterium has an ability to produce and accumulate arginine in a medium when the bacterium is cultivated in the medium, and which forms a colony within 2 days at 37°C when the bacterium is cultivated on an agar medium containing acetic acid or acetate as a sole carbon source.

9. (Withdrawn) A mutant strain of *Escherichia coli* which has an ability to produce and accumulate arginine, and which grows faster than the parental strain of the mutant strain when the *Escherichia coli* strain is cultivated in a medium containing acetic acid or acetate as a sole carbon source.

10. (Previously Presented) The *Escherichia coli* according to claim 7, wherein the bacterium is *Escherichia coli* K-12.

11. (Previously Presented) The *Escherichia coli* according to claim 8, wherein the bacterium is *Escherichia coli* K-12.

12. (Withdrawn) The *Escherichia coli* according to claim 9, wherein the bacterium is *Escherichia coli* K-12.

13. (Withdrawn) *Escherichia coli* strain 382 deposited as VKPM B-7926, which produces and accumulates arginine in a medium when cultivated in the medium; and which utilizes acetate; and mutants thereof.

14. (Withdrawn) A mutant *Escherichia coli* strain obtained from *Escherichia coli* 237 deposited as VKPM B-7925, which mutant *Escherichia coli* produces and accumulates arginine in a medium when cultivated in the medium; and which utilizes acetate.

15. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the isolated *Escherichia coli* of Claim 7 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

16. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the isolated *Escherichia coli* of Claim 8 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

17. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the mutant strain of *Escherichia coli* of Claim 9 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

18. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the *Escherichia coli* of Claim 10 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

19. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the *Escherichia coli* of Claim 11 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

20. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the *Escherichia coli* of Claim 12 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

21. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the *Escherichia coli* of Claim 13 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

22. (Withdrawn) A method of producing arginine, comprising cultivating the *Escherichia coli* of Claim 14 in a medium to produce and accumulate arginine in the medium; and collecting the arginine from the medium.

23. (Previously Presented) The isolated *Escherichia coli* according to claim 7, wherein the bacterium is *Escherichia coli* strain 382 deposited as VKPM B-7926 and mutants thereof.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 7-8 have been amended.

Support for the amendment of Claims 7-8 is found in Claims 1-6 and the specification as originally filed, for example at page 10, line 11 to page 12, line 5.

No new matter is believed to have been added by these amendments.